

The U.S. Census collects information on Hispanic origin and Hispanic subgroups as do North Carolina birth and death certificates since 1988. However, some of these data have substantial problems as described below.

1990 Census Counts

North Carolinians age five and older who reported Hispanic origin in the 1990 census numbered 67,936, while the number of persons age five and older who reported speaking Spanish or Spanish Creole at home numbered 105,963. This discrepancy suggests an undercount of Hispanics. Thus, population-based rates of birth, death, disease, etc. would be expected to be biased upward for North Carolina's Hispanic population. The undercount of Hispanics appears to be especially great at younger ages as shown by available age-specific counts and those ratios:

<u>Persons Reporting</u>	<u>Age in 1990</u>			
	<u>Total</u> <u>5 and Older</u>	<u>5-17</u>	<u>18-64</u>	<u>65 and Older</u>
Hispanic Origin*	67,836	15,067	49,963	2,806
Spanish Speaking*	105,963	31,276	71,252	3,435
Ratio	.64	.48	.70	.82

*Hispanic Origin is from Tape File 1 (100% tabulations) while Spanish Speaking is from Tape File 3 (sample tabulations).

In addition to the above classification problem, special problems exist in data collection among migrant workers who move often and undocumented aliens who fear discovery. The extent to which Hispanic persons were missed entirely in the 1990 census is unknown.

Live Births

Usually provided by the newborn's mother, race/ethnicity information at birth should be relatively accurate. Thus, given the census problems discussed above, it is not surprising that Hispanics represent a substantially higher proportion of live births than they do census counts of females of childbearing ages, as shown below. The result is that 1990 Hispanic birth rates would probably be biased upward to an unknown extent.

<u>Hispanics as a</u> <u>Percentage of 1990</u>	<u>Age in 1990</u>			
	<u>Total</u> <u>15-44</u>	<u>15-24</u>	<u>25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>
Live Births	1.68	1.90	1.51	1.34
Female Population	1.11	1.27	1.22	0.82
Ratio	1.51	1.50	1.24	1.63